

IL 10-2001-013

In Reply Refer To: 10A2A

October 3, 2001

UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH'S INFORMATION LETTER

**USE OF UPWARD MOBILITY PROGRAMS AS A WORKFORCE
PLANNING TOOL**

1. An important element in the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) workforce planning strategy is the identification of employees in the current workforce who have the competencies and talent to progress to more responsible positions in the organization. VHA recognizes that professional development and training opportunities must be provided if talented employees are to be expected to stay with VHA and grow as individuals. An effective method of systematically making such opportunities available is through the establishment of formal upward mobility programs, especially when used in combination with other internal and external recruitment initiatives.
2. Facility Directors, Human Resources Management Officers, and other management officials are strongly urged to consider utilizing upward mobility programs as part of their workforce and/or succession planning strategy. Formal upward mobility programs facilitate the identification of lower-graded employees who are underutilized or who demonstrate potential for advancement and provide for them planned programs of counseling, education, and/or training leading to placement in specific target positions. Training under such programs goes beyond normal staff improvement practices. Such training is designed to qualify individuals to move into different occupational fields that offer opportunities for upward mobility, or to progress in their present fields if formal education or training is a prerequisite for further career advancement.
3. As part of workforce planning, facilities need to identify target positions within their organizations for which there are reasonable prospects of future staffing needs. An assessment can be made of the competencies necessary to successfully perform such work. Once the competencies are identified, the workforce can be evaluated to determine if there are current employees that possess these competencies, or show potential to successfully acquire such competencies through a formal development program. If the assessment shows that sufficient talent and potential exists in the current workforce, a formal upward mobility program would be a highly effective tool that can contribute toward ensuring that the organization will have a competent staff in place to meet its future mission demands.
4. Policy and guidance on establishing and administering upward mobility programs are contained in MP-5, Part I, Chapter 410 and its Appendix A. Questions regarding the provisions of this Chapter and Appendix should be referred to the Human Resources Development

IL 10-2001-013
October 3, 2001

Team (053) at 202-273-4967. Questions relating to the contents of this information letter can be referred to Brian McVeigh, Management Support Office (10A2A), at 202-273-9790

S/ Tom Sanders for
Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Under Secretary for Health

DISTRIBUTION: CO: E-mailed 10/4/2001
FLD: VISN, MA, DO, OC, OCRO, and 200 – E-mailed 10/4/2001